

Employee Competence and Job Placement as Determinants of Employee Performance in Local Government: Evidence from the Department of Manpower, Bandung Regency

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance represents a critical organizational capability that supports the effective delivery of public services. Although competence and job placement have been widely recognized as important determinants of performance, their combined influence has received limited attention in local government organizations. This study examines the independent and combined effects of employee competence and job placement on employee performance in the context of a local government agency. The study employed a quantitative explanatory approach using a census of employees. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis, then analyzed using multiple linear regression after confirming that the data met the required statistical assumptions. The findings show that both employee competence and appropriate job placement have significant positive effects on employee performance. Job placement demonstrates a stronger contribution than competence, while both variables jointly provide substantial explanatory power for variations in employee performance. These findings highlight the importance of aligning employee capabilities with organizational positions to improve performance in the public sector. The study concludes that strengthening competence and implementing merit-based job placement should become complementary human resource management strategies to support more effective and accountable local government performance.

Keywords: Employee Competence; Job Placement; Employee Performance; Public Sector Human Resource Management; Local Government; Merit System.



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INTRODUCTION

The quality of human resources has become a key determinant of organizational success in the public sector amid globalization and ongoing bureaucratic transformation. Public sector reforms across various countries place bureaucratic performance improvement as a primary agenda to achieve effective, transparent, and accountable governance. Numerous studies in public administration confirm that the quality of government organizational performance is significantly influenced by individual employee competencies and the alignment of job placements with employee capabilities (Afriana, 2021; Tammubua et al., 2025; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Globally, international organizations such as the OECD and the World Bank emphasize the importance of building civil servant capacity through competency strengthening and integrated talent management systems. Employee competencies extend beyond technical expertise to include cognitive, emotional, and social capabilities that enable individuals to respond effectively to organizational changes and meet the growing complexity of public service demands. Empirical research consistently demonstrates that highly competent employees exhibit higher levels of productivity because they can comprehend tasks comprehensively, make accurate decisions, and interact effectively with stakeholders (Boyatzis, 2018; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Furthermore, appropriate job placement has been proven to substantially contribute to motivation, job satisfaction, and individual performance (Dessler, 2020; Cascio, 2018).

In Indonesia, efforts to improve government apparatus performance constitute a central component of the ongoing bureaucratic reform agenda. The Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP), regulated through Ministerial Regulation on Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, requires each agency to demonstrate measurable and accountable performance through transparent reporting. However, bureaucratic reform evaluations indicate that regional government apparatus performance continues to face challenges, particularly concerning the quality of employee competencies and job placement practices that are not yet fully merit-based (Karningsih & Ari, 2024; Rahman et al., 2026). Previous research on employee competence in the public sector has primarily focused on competency development through training and education (Ekaningdiah, 2025; Rerung et al., 2025), while studies on job placement have highlighted the negative consequences of educational background mismatches on employee productivity (Afriana, 2021; Panggabean & Pertiwi, 2024; Sukanti & Sulistyaningrum, 2022). However, most existing studies examine these two variables independently, thus failing to provide a comprehensive picture of their simultaneous influence on employee performance within public organizational contexts (Ambarwati & Herawati, 25 C.E.; Ernawan et al., 2021).

This research gap is particularly salient in the context of the Bandung Regency Department of Manpower (Dinas Tenaga Kerja Kabupaten Bandung), a regional government agency with a strategic role in employment services and regional human resource development. Based on initial observations, employee performance at this agency faces several constraints, including suboptimal work quality, task completion agility, and communication effectiveness, conditions potentially attributable to competency-position mismatches and non-merit-based placement practices.

Accordingly, this study examines the extent to which employee competence and job placement influence employee performance, both independently and simultaneously, at the Department of Manpower of Bandung Regency. The study also advances the public administration literature by offering an integrated analytical framework that combines employee competence and job placement as key determinants of employee performance. Practically, the findings are intended to serve as an evidence base for local government

policymakers in formulating more effective, merit-based human resource management strategies.

The novelty of this study is threefold. First, unlike prior studies that examine competence or job placement in isolation, this research quantifies the relative partial contribution of each factor within a single regression model, allowing a direct comparison of their strength. Second, it situates this comparison within a local government employment-services agency, a setting rarely studied in the existing public HRM literature. Third, it provides an empirically grounded argument that structural personnel decisions (placement) may outweigh individual capacity-building (competence) in explaining performance outcomes, which carries distinct policy implications for merit-system reform at the sub-national level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Competence

Competence can be understood as a set of underlying individual characteristics that have a causal relationship with effective or outstanding performance based on predefined job or situational performance standards (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Blömeke et al., 2022; Salman et al., 2020). In the context of public organizations, employee competence encompasses three interrelated dimensions: intellectual competence, emotional competence, and social competence. Intellectual competence refers to the cognitive capabilities required to analyze complex problems and make sound decisions; emotional competence encompasses self-regulation, empathy, and motivation; and social competence relates to the capacity to build effective interpersonal relationships with colleagues and service recipients (Boyatzis, 2018; Truninger et al., 2018). Competency-based human resource management posits that the alignment between individual competencies and job requirements is a primary driver of organizational performance (Campion et al., 2020; Sabuhari et al., 2020).

Job Placement

Job placement is the process of allocating employees to positions that correspond with their competencies, educational background, work experience, and professional capabilities. (Dessler, 2020). The foundational principle of effective job placement is the right person in the right place, meaning that each employee should be positioned in a role that maximizes their potential and aligns with their capacity (Cascio, 2018). In the public sector context, research demonstrates that misalignment between educational background and job placement significantly reduces employee productivity (Safira & Marginingsih, 2022), while (Kampelmann & Rycx, 2012) show that competency-disregarding placement practices are associated with lower performance outcomes in regional government agencies.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is defined as the level of work outcomes achieved by an individual in fulfilling assigned responsibilities while meeting established organizational standards. In the public sector, performance is commonly measured across multiple dimensions, including work quality, task agility, initiative, proficiency, and communication effectiveness (Mangkunegara, 2017; Butarbutar & Indrawan, 2024). The integration of competency-based approaches with merit-based job placement has been identified as a key mechanism for maximizing employee performance in public

organizations (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Kampelmann & Rycx, 2012). Based on the theoretical arguments presented, the study formulates three hypotheses:

H1: Employee competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H2: Job placement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H3: Employee competence and job placement collectively have a significant effect on employee performance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Building on the literature reviewed above, this study conceptualizes employee performance as the joint outcome of an individual-level factor (competence) and a structural-organizational factor (job placement). Employee Competence (X_1) is positioned as an input attribute residing within the individual, the intellectual, emotional, and social capacities an employee brings to the role. Job Placement (X_2) is positioned as a structural-organizational condition external to the individual—the degree to which the organization has matched that individual to a position congruent with his or her competencies, educational background, and experience. Employee Performance (Y) is the resultant work outcome. Because competence and placement operate at different levels of analysis (individual versus organizational), the framework treats them as related but conceptually distinct antecedents rather than as substitutes for one another, consistent with person-job fit theory (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) and competency-based human resource management theory (Campion et al., 2020).

Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework of this study, which illustrates the relationship between two independent variables and one dependent variable. Employee Competence (X_1), which consists of intellectual, emotional, and social competencies, and Job Placement (X_2), which includes educational background suitability, job knowledge mastery, and skill/experience suitability, are each depicted as having a direct and positive influence path on Employee Performance (Y) — repeated through the clock hands H_1 and H_2 . In addition, the dotted line H_3 depicts the simultaneous effect of both independent variables on employee performance, indicating that competence and job placement not only have separate effects, but also complement each other in explaining variations in employee performance together. Employee Performance itself is measured through indicators of work quality, speed of task completion, initiative, skills, and communication effectiveness.

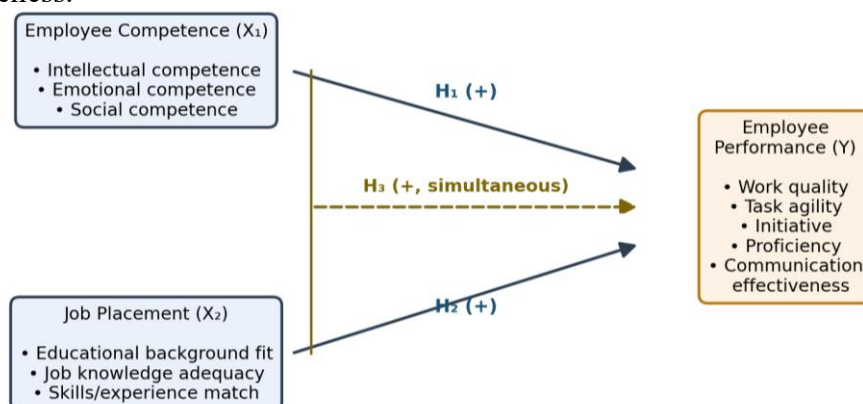


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Employee Competence and Job Placement as Determinants of Employee Performance

Source: Own Compilation (2026)

RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative explanatory research design was employed to examine the causal relationships between employee competence, job placement, and employee performance. In this model, employee competence (X1) and job placement (X2) represent the independent variables, whereas employee performance (Y) constitutes the dependent variable. Data collection was undertaken at the Department of Manpower of Bandung Regency during the period of July to October 2024.

The population consists of all employees of the Department of Manpower of Bandung Regency (N = 72), encompassing structural officials, administrative staff, and operational employees. Given the small population size, census (saturated) sampling was applied, making all 72 employees the study respondents. This approach is consistent with the guidelines of Sugiyono (2019) for populations of fewer than 100 individuals.

Data were collected through two complementary approaches: library research (secondary sources, regulatory documents, and prior studies) and field research. Field data collection employed four methods: (1) structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale; (2) direct observation of work processes; (3) semi-structured interviews with key informants; and (4) documentation review of official personnel records and performance reports.

The questionnaire instrument measured three main constructs: Competence (X1), operationalized through indicators of intellectual competence, emotional competence, and social competence; Job Placement (X2), measured through indicators of educational background alignment, job knowledge adequacy, and skills and work experience match; and Employee Performance (Y), assessed through indicators of work quality, task agility, initiative, proficiency, and communication effectiveness.

Instrument validity was evaluated using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test, with item validity determined by a correlation coefficient (r) greater than the critical value of 0.30. All measurement items satisfied this criterion and were therefore considered valid. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha, adopting a minimum acceptable value of $\alpha > 0.60$. As shown in Table 1, all constructs demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability. However, the Job Placement construct ($\alpha = 0.607$) only slightly exceeded the required threshold, indicating a potential measurement limitation that is addressed in the Discussion section.

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria
Competence	0.728	Reliable
Job Placement	0.607	Reliable (marginal)
Employee Performance	0.666	Reliable

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

Before performing multiple linear regression, the data were tested for compliance with the classical regression assumptions. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to evaluate residual normality, the Glejser test was applied to identify potential heteroscedasticity, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) together with Tolerance statistics were employed to assess multicollinearity. The obtained VIF values (< 10) and Tolerance values (> 0.10) indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern. Overall, the diagnostic results verified the suitability of the data for multiple linear regression analysis.

Data Analysis

Ordinal-scale data from the Likert questionnaire were transformed to an interval scale using the Method of Successive Intervals (MSI) before parametric analysis. The analysis sequence comprised: (1) correlation analysis to determine the strength of inter-variable relationships; (2) multiple linear regression analysis with the model $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$; (3) coefficient of determination (R^2) and adjusted R^2 to assess the proportion of variance explained; (4) partial hypothesis testing via t-test ($df = 69$; $\alpha = 0.05$; t-table = 1.995); and (5) simultaneous hypothesis testing via F-test ($df = 2.69$; $\alpha = 0.05$; F-table = 3.134).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the distribution of the study variables before hypothesis testing. As presented in Table 2, the mean scores of competence, job placement, and employee performance were all above 4.00 on a five-point Likert scale, indicating that respondents generally perceived the levels of competence, job placement suitability, and performance to be relatively high. The standard deviations ranged from 0.49 to 0.58, suggesting moderate variability among respondents and no indication of excessive dispersion.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Competence	72	4.12	0.49
Job Placement	72	4.06	0.53
Employee Performance	72	4.18	0.58

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

Inter-Variable Correlations

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among competence, job placement, and employee performance. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	Competence	Job Placement	Employee Performance
Competence	1.000	–	–
Job Placement	0.517	1.000	–
Employee Performance	0.528	0.586	1.000

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

Table 3 indicates a moderate positive relationship between competence and employee performance ($r = 0.528$). A slightly stronger relationship was observed between job placement and employee performance ($r = 0.586$). The correlation between competence and job placement ($r = 0.517$) remained below the commonly accepted multicollinearity threshold, confirming that the two predictors were sufficiently independent to be included in the same regression model.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the simultaneous influence of competence and job placement on employee performance. The regression coefficients are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	Mean	SD	B (Unstandardized)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	–	–	0.914	0.382	–	2.394	0.019
Competence (X ₁)	4.12	0.49	0.352	0.078	0.299	4.530	0.000
Job Placement (X ₂)	4.06	0.53	0.421	0.079	0.394	5.348	0.000

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

The estimated multiple linear regression model is expressed as follows:

$$Y = 0.914 + 0.352X_1 + 0.421X_2 + e$$

The regression coefficients indicate that both competence and job placement positively influence employee performance. Holding job placement constant, a one-unit increase in competence is associated with an increase of 0.352 units in employee performance. Likewise, a one-unit increase in job placement suitability increases employee performance by 0.421 units, controlling for competence.

The standardized regression coefficients provide a direct comparison of the relative influence of each predictor. Job placement demonstrated a larger standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.394$) than competence ($\beta = 0.299$), indicating that job placement contributes more strongly to employee performance after controlling for differences in measurement scales.

The significance of each independent variable was examined through partial hypothesis testing using the *t*-test. The analysis adopted a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, with 69 degrees of freedom, resulting in a critical *t*-value of 1.995.

Table 5. Partial Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	t-count	t-table	Sig.	Decision
Competence (X ₁)	4.530	1.995	0.000	H ₁ Accepted
Job Placement (X ₂)	5.348	1.995	0.000	H ₂ Accepted

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

As shown in Table 5, competence significantly influences employee performance ($t = 4.530$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, job placement significantly affects employee performance ($t = 5.348$, $p < 0.001$). Since both calculated *t*-values exceed the critical value, the first and second hypotheses are supported. Furthermore, the larger *t*-value for job placement indicates that it has a relatively stronger contribution to employee performance than competence.

The simultaneous effect of competence and job placement on employee performance was examined using the *F*-test.

Table 6. Simultaneous Hypothesis Test Results

Model	F-count	F-table	Sig.	Decision
Regression	46.058	3.134	0.000	H ₃ Accepted

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 46.058$, $p < 0.001$). Since the calculated F-value substantially exceeded the critical value, competence and job placement jointly exert a significant influence on employee performance. Therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted.

To evaluate the model's explanatory capability, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination

Relationship	r / R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Competence → Employee Performance	0.528	27.86%	–
Job Placement → Employee Performance	0.586	34.29%	–
Competence + Job Placement → Employee Performance	0.756	57.20%	55.96%

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

The results indicate that competence independently explains 27.86% of the variance in employee performance, whereas job placement accounts for 34.29%. When analyzed simultaneously, both variables explain 57.20% of the variance in employee performance, with an adjusted R^2 of 55.96%. Consequently, approximately 44.04% of the variation in employee performance is attributable to other factors not included in the present model, such as work motivation, leadership, organizational culture, compensation, and work environment.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that both competence and job placement are significant determinants of employee performance. However, the larger standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.394$) and higher t-value associated with job placement suggest that appropriate job placement exerts a stronger relative influence on employee performance than competence within the Department of Manpower of Bandung Regency. This finding underscores the strategic importance of merit-based placement policies alongside competency development initiatives in improving public sector organizational performance.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Competence on Employee Performance

The finding that employee competence significantly influences performance ($t = 4.530$, $p < 0.05$) is consistent with a substantial body of human resource management literature. Spencer and Spencer (1993) (Afriana, 2021) established that competency clusters, particularly cognitive and self-regulatory competencies, are predictive of superior performance across occupational domains. In the public sector context, (Priatna, 2020) found that the professional and social competence of civil servants significantly determines the effectiveness of public service delivery, while (Sudewo & Sulastri, 2022) demonstrated that competency development through training and education positively contributes to the productivity and work quality of government officials.

The intellectual, emotional, and social competencies measured in this study collectively enable employees at the Department of Manpower to execute tasks more accurately, adapt to shifting organizational demands, and engage productively with service recipients. The partial contribution of 27.86% underscores that while competence is a meaningful driver of performance, it operates within a broader organizational system in which structural factors, such as job placement, also play a determinative role.

It is worth noting why competence, although significant, contributes a comparatively smaller share of variance in this setting. Competence indicators in this study, intellectual, emotional, and social capability, describe what an employee is capable

of doing; they do not by themselves guarantee that the organization has created the conditions for that capability to be exercised. In a civil-service environment governed by formal position descriptions and standard operating procedures, an employee's discretion to apply competence beyond the boundaries of an assigned role is limited. Consistent with this reasoning, competence in the present sample correlates positively but only moderately with performance ($r = 0.528$), suggesting that its translation into observable performance outcomes is partially conditioned by factors outside the individual, including the placement decisions examined next.

The Influence of Job Placement on Employee Performance

Job placement emerged as the stronger individual predictor of employee performance in this study ($t = 5.348$, $p < 0.05$; contribution = 34.29%), a finding that aligns with and extends existing literature. (Afriana, 2021) demonstrated that mismatches between educational background and job position substantially reduce employee productivity in government agencies, while (Rahmawati et al., 2021) similarly found that placement practices disregarding individual competence and experience are associated with diminished work effectiveness in regional government contexts. Dessler (2020) and Cascio (2018) both identify the right person in the right place principle as foundational to talent management systems that generate high organizational performance.

The finding that job placement exerts a relatively greater partial contribution than competence (34.29% vs. 27.86%) carries important practical implications: employees possessing strong competencies may still underperform if placed in positions misaligned with their capabilities, whereas structurally appropriate placement amplifies the performance benefits of individual competence. This reinforces the argument that, in public sector organizations, structural and administrative decisions concerning personnel placement are at least as consequential as individual-level capacity building.

Why Job Placement Outweighs Competence in This Setting

Three complementary explanations help account for why job placement emerged as the dominant predictor rather than competence, and why this pattern surfaced specifically within a local government employment-services agency.

First, from the standpoint of person-environment fit theory (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) and role theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978), placement functions as a structural gatekeeper that determines whether an employee's competence can be expressed at all. A civil servant's formal position (jabatan) defines the scope of authority, the tasks for which he or she is accountable, and the resources to which he or she has access. Competence that is not matched to a congruent role has limited opportunity to convert into observable performance, whereas even moderate competence channeled into a well-matched role can be exercised fully. In effect, placement operates as a precondition that governs the ceiling on competence's contribution, which is consistent with the comparatively larger standardized effect of placement ($\beta = 0.394$) relative to competence ($\beta = 0.299$) found in this study.

Second, the salience of placement is heightened by the specific organizational setting. As a technical implementing agency (Dinas) at the regency level, the Department of Manpower operates under significant budgetary and administrative constraints on individual competency development: structured training and certification programs are typically designed and funded at the national or provincial level (e.g., through the National Civil Service Agency/BKN or the State Institute of Public Administration/LAN), leaving local units with comparatively little discretion over how competence is built. Personnel placement (rotasi and mutasi), by contrast, is a lever that

regional agencies and regional heads (Bupati) exercise directly. Because placement decisions are made locally and can be adjusted more readily than competence-building programs, they plausibly account for a larger share of the variation observed within a single local agency, employees in this sample differ more in how well they are matched to their roles than in their underlying competence, which is reflected in the higher mean and comparable spread of the Job Placement construct relative to Competence in Table 2.

Third, characteristics of Indonesian bureaucracy help explain why placement, specifically, carries this weight. Indonesia's civil service remains a hierarchical, rule-bound (Weberian) system in which career progression and position assignment have historically been shaped as much by tenure, seniority, and administrative procedure as by an objective mapping of competencies to job requirements (Karningsih & Ari, 2024). Although Law No. 5 of 2014 on State Civil Apparatus (ASN) formally establishes a merit-based system, empirical reviews of its implementation report that placement practices at the sub-national level are not yet fully merit-based and continue to be influenced by patronage and seniority norms alongside meritocratic criteria (Rahman et al., 2026; Karningsih & Ari, 2024). In such a context, the alignment between an employee's competence and his or her assigned position is not a foregone conclusion but a variable outcome of administrative decisions which is precisely why placement quality, when it does align well with competence, distinguishes itself so clearly as a determinant of performance. Where placement is treated as a routine administrative formality rather than a deliberate, competency-based decision, its variation across employees becomes a more powerful explanatory factor than competence itself, whose distribution across the workforce is comparatively more homogeneous ($SD = 0.49$ versus 0.53 for placement, Table 2).

Taken together, these explanations suggest that the dominance of job placement observed here is not merely a statistical artifact of this sample but a theoretically expected outcome of (a) placement's structural role as a precondition for competence to be expressed, (b) the local government's greater practical control over placement than over competency development, and (c) the bureaucratic characteristics of the Indonesian civil service, in which merit-based placement is still being institutionalized rather than fully realized.

The Simultaneous Influence of Competence and Job Placement on Employee Performance

The simultaneous analysis demonstrates that competence and job placement jointly explain 57.2% of the variance in employee performance (adjusted $R^2 = 55.96\%$; $F = 46.058$, $p < 0.05$), reflecting a synergistic relationship between individual-level and organizational-level factors. This finding is consistent with competency-based human resource management theory, which emphasizes that the alignment between individual competencies and job demands rather than either factor in isolation is the primary determinant of effective organizational performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

The remaining unexplained variance (approximately 44%) points to the influence of factors beyond the scope of this study, including work motivation, leadership quality, organizational culture, and reward systems. Future research would benefit from incorporating these variables into an extended model to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of public sector employee performance.

Study Limitations

Several limitations warrant consideration when interpreting the results. First, the cross-sectional nature of the study captures relationships at a single point in time, thereby restricting the strength of causal inference, even though causal terminology is conventionally employed in explanatory regression studies. Future research using longitudinal or experimental designs would provide more robust evidence regarding causal relationships.

Second, the study was conducted at a single regional agency ($N = 72$), which limits the generalizability of the findings to other public sector organizations with different organizational cultures or staffing structures. Third, all data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to common method bias and social desirability effects. Fourth, the Job Placement construct exhibited only marginal reliability ($\alpha = 0.607$), suggesting that the underlying indicators may benefit from further refinement in future instrument development. These limitations point to the value of replication across multiple agencies, the use of multi-source performance data (e.g., supervisor ratings), and longitudinal designs in future studies.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study makes a theoretical contribution to the fields of public administration and public sector human resource management by offering empirical evidence that employee performance in regional government organizations is jointly determined by individual competence and structural job placement practices. The incorporation of these variables into an integrated analytical model provides a more comprehensive explanation of employee performance than previous studies that have treated competence and job placement as separate determinants.

Practically, the findings carry direct implications for the Bandung Regency Department of Manpower and similar regional government agencies. The disproportionate contribution of job placement to employee performance suggests that while competency development programs are valuable, their impact is contingent on the existence of an objective, merit-based placement system that channels competent employees into roles that match their capabilities. Local governments are therefore encouraged to strengthen both the regulatory and operational dimensions of merit-based personnel management, in alignment with the civil service reform mandate currently being pursued under national bureaucratic reform policies.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of employee competence and job placement on employee performance at the Department of Manpower of Bandung Regency. The results confirm that both competence (partial contribution: 27.86%) and job placement (partial contribution: 34.29%) exert statistically significant positive effects on employee performance. Simultaneously, both variables explain 57.2% of the total variance in employee performance (adjusted $R^2 = 55.96\%$), indicating their combined strategic importance in shaping organizational effectiveness.

A notable finding is that job placement demonstrates a relatively stronger influence than competence alone, suggesting that structural alignment between employees and their positions is at least as important as individual capacity development in determining public sector performance outcomes. These findings reinforce the strategic

value of competency-based HRM and merit-based job placement systems as levers for improving governance quality at the local government level.

Considering that this study employed a cross-sectional design and focused on a single government agency, its findings should be interpreted cautiously with respect to causal relationships and their broader applicability. Future studies are encouraged to extend the analytical framework by including additional determinants, such as work motivation, leadership behavior, organizational culture, and performance-based incentive systems. Further research involving multiple regional government agencies, preferably using longitudinal designs and multi-source performance assessments, would strengthen the generalizability of the findings and provide more robust empirical evidence to support public sector human resource management policy reform in Indonesia.

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